His principle of appointing to office the ablest, although harking back to the Legalistic Ch'in, could plead for justification Confucian precepts. He made a descendant of Confucius the superintendent of public instruction, and he encouraged the study of the Classics to which the Confucianists looked for authority. He chose at least some of his functionaries from those most skilled in the Classics. He gave a blow to the Legalist school—which continued to be influential—by refusing to appoint to the public service those trained in it. He furthered, in other words, that adoption of Confucianism by the state which was to be one of the outstanding features of later Chinese government.

This emphasis on Confucianism had the effect of carrying over to the new age the ethics and formal courtesy of the Chou feudal aristocracy. The new ruling classes were thereby encouraged to a certain refinement of life and to the maintenance of a partial continuity with the culture of the past.

Still, Legalism continued, and even after Wu Ti's death there was staged at court a debate between an official who supported certain Legalist measures inherited from Wu Ti and the Confucian opponents of that policy.

Much of the revival of Confucianism is attributed to two convinced adherents of that school, Kung-sun Hung and Tung Chung-shu. Kung-sun Hung, formerly a swineherd, took a high stand among the scholars examined by Wu Ti and, during years in public office, lived simply and gave freely of his substance to the poor. Tung Chung-shu was a diligent student much influenced by Taoism. He was the reputed founder and certainly a leader of a philosophy which declared that when the state committed evil and injustice Heaven would show its displeasure by

famines, earthquakes, fires, and floods, and if these were not heeded would seek to bring the ruler to repentance by such portents as eclipses and comets. If the Emperor were still recalcitrant, final ruin would come. This theory professed to be Confucianist and was very influential under the Han and, indeed, under later dynasties.

In some respects the Confucianism of Wu Ti's reign differed decidedly from that of the Chou. It was more positively theistic than was either Confucius or Mencius, stressing the beneficent rule of Heaven in the affairs of men, and it made more of a belief in spirits than did either of these two sages—thus finding room